



# Washington Park Arboretum

## Multi-use Trail Project

### Final Public Meeting

February 27, 2014 6:30- 8 p.m.

#### Meeting Minutes

#### Presenters:

Andy Sheffer– Seattle Parks and Recreation

Andy Mitton– The Berger Partnership

Peter Lagerwey –Toole Design Group

Kristen Lohse–Toole Design Group

#### Other staff present:

Kerrie Stoops, Seattle Parks and Recreation

65 people in attendance

Q Why not use crushed rock as surfacing?

A: The use of soft trails by cyclists could be unsafe at turns and steep grades. We are also expanding access to many users as possible as part of the Arboretum Master Plan.

Q. Can we designate bicycle routes?

A: We will have consistent signage throughout Arboretum with designated bike routes through the park.

Q. I like what I see. Cyclists should not be on Lake WA Blvd. The worst area is north end by 520 and not affected by proposed project.

A: North Entry project will address these issues, the ramps will go away. Cyclists will have an alternative with the loop trail, but we don't anticipate changing the ability for them to use Lake Washington Blvd.

Q. I use the running trails. Will they be paved?

A: We are not paving other trails, just this one. There will still be a two ft. soft shoulder on either side of the trail.

Q: Will this attract more users? What about parking and traffic mitigation.

A: We anticipate more pedestrians. We will be improving parking by the Visitors Center and the Interlaken intersection. The North Entry project will also add additional parking. We will be working with SDOT on traffic connections in the neighborhood.

Q. We are concerned about traffic and parking issues in the neighborhood; particularly, at Interlaken at 24<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, with estimated crossing of 50-60 cars per signal, as well as at E Lynn and E Boston. Calhoun is also a good crossing.

A: We are excited to be coordinating with SDOT's pedestrian and bicycle group about enhancing neighborhood connections leading to the Arboretum and the Multi-use trail.

Q. In 2000 I heard Lake Washington Blvd would be closed to cyclists. What is happening with that?

A: We have not heard of this, and do not anticipate the use to change.

Q. What about doing something like Green Lake – one side for walking, one side for biking?

A: We do not anticipate the volume of users at Green Lake. Green Lake is a different design, is the most frequented park in Washington. The volume on the multi-use trail will be small in comparison.

Q. Will cyclists stop using the road and now use the trail? Is it safer to go on the trail? What type of terrain?

A: Cyclists can follow 26<sup>th</sup> as a designated route, Arboretum Drive, or Lake Washington Blvd depending on their comfort level and ability. The trail will be slow and curving.

Q. So the new trail will not be attractive to cyclists? I find this to be offensive. It is difficult to be on Lake Washington Blvd and get through the Arboretum at car speeds.

A: The trail is intended for recreational cyclists traveling at slower speeds.

Q. Address the construction timeline? Will Azalea Way be open?

A: Construction will occur in phases. Phase 1 will begin in 2015 and include Madison to Interlaken Blvd. Phase 2 will begin in 2016 and be from Interlaken to Foster Island Dr. The staging area will be in the middle at the Interlaken parking lot so as not to disturb land or affect traffic. We will be cognizant of keeping Azalea Way open.

Q. Can you estimate traffic on the trail?

A: We do not have numbers of users; however Arboretum Dr. is a good comparison.

Q. Do you anticipate more bicycle traffic? Can we have signage that says to stay to right like Myrtle Edwards? Or use voice / bell to pass?

A: Pedestrian and bicycle volumes may increase and adjustments may be needed in the future with regard to direction of flow and signage. We could possibly split the trail into two one way segments. We want to be thoughtful and considerate of too much signage, but you could add more as necessary.

Q. What will the Lake Washington Blvd experience be? What will happen to the trees?

A: 80% of the trail will not be visible from the Lake Washington Blvd. It will be visible by Foster Island Dr. and by stone cottage near Madison – where you can currently see the existing trail from the road.

Q. What will the lighting be like?

A: There will be no lighting on the trail. The street lighting on Lake Washington Blvd will provide ambient light in some locations.

Q. How are you addressing the Foster Island Dr to Lake Washington Blvd intersection issues?

A: Those using the trail will be encouraged to end the loop at Arboretum Drive and Foster Island Dr. and not intersect the street at Lake Washington Blvd and Foster Island Dr. When the north entry project is implemented, the Multi-use trail users can continue north at Foster Island Dr. In the interim the Wilcox Bridge is our primary north connection.

Q. What about the Boyer connection?

A: We are constructing a bridge across Arboretum creek to the trail. This extension from the Multi-use trail will receive users from the crosswalk from Boyer Ave.

Q. You need to have a conversation with SDOT. How about stop signs?

A: We are meeting with SDOT next week to evaluate these options. The Arboretum Master plan calls for a pedestrian crossing signal.

Q. Will wheelchairs be able to use trail?

A: It is primarily ADA accessible; however, there are two areas with a slope of around 9% for a short distance. There are benches every 400 ft for resting.

Q. What is the current posted speed on Lake WA Blvd?

A: 25 mph.

Q. The rough asphalt is hard on the body, how will you address this impediment?

A: We are evaluating different options, including 1/2 inch aggregate which is standard roadway hot mix asphalt (HMA). The coarse aggregate is ADA compliant but rougher faster moving bicycle traffic. If you bike slowly it will not be noticeable. It will make it easier to hear someone approaching.

Q. Visually intrusive fencing? It looks like vertical blinds sideways. Is there an example of where this was used before so we can see it?

A: The presentation showed that from the front you see gaps and light but when traveling longitudinally it is a visual barrier. There are code requirements for guard rails which require that a four inch sphere cannot pass through. Kew Gardens in London is a great example.

Q. What are you doing about the English Holly running rampant through the Arboretum?

A: The Arboretum volunteers and stewards are working to control the spread.

Q. New parking lot? Paved or gravel?

A: Paved. Striped to demarcate stalls, there will be a rain garden to treat run off.

Q. Funding and design for North Entry?

A: WSDOT was presented a design and budget. The total project budget was \$12.2 million and we are waiting on the funding from WSDOT. Only a conceptual design has been completed to facilitate a cost estimate.

Q. SDOT and WSDOT, why not here? How will integration of east to west Arboretum happen?

A: We are planning stronger connections across Lake Washington Blvd in collaboration with SDOT. Bridging across Lake Washington Blvd is in the millions of dollars and not cost effective.

Q. How do things become priority for SDOT? Could there be pedestrian and traffic light crossings?

A: SDOT requires traffic studies. A pedestrian counter would help to get a controlled device or signal for crossing. We are coordinating with SDOT to advocate for some additional safety measures.

### Miscellaneous Comments

The Arboretum Master Plan was developed through support by the City Council, UW, and the Arboretum Foundation. It is the only state arboretum. The partnership oversees activity at the Arboretum and works together to move things forward. It is a great example of public agencies working together.

This is phase one of a two phase project. The ramps will remain in the interim as 520 awaits funding for the West approach. There will be less traffic through the Arboretum in the future. The plan is to eliminate the ramps and make the 520 connection at Montlake Blvd.

SDOT Bicycle Master Plan, working to design with the neighborhood Greenway group to better accommodate bicycle traffic through the corridor. This may happen in future.

The community is concerned about pedestrian and bike safety going east/west trying to cross the 24<sup>th</sup> Ave corridor to the Arboretum.

I bicycle on Lake WA Blvd and keep up with traffic. No one stops or slows for 15 mph cross walk. Not interested in biking loop trail due to the rough surfacing.

### Written Comments

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- We are neighbors – our property home abuts /meets arboretum property and we are highly supportive.
- As a resident of the stone cottage, I'm still very concerned with how close the trail comes to the house. The further you can move it from the house the better. People will also be very close to my window. A privacy fence or something to keep people from looking into the house would be great.
- Please do everything you can to get bikes off Lake Washington Blvd.
- 4 routes – different speeds and purposes. Very much want slow speed. Trail will be rough so it is noisy. 127 trees, 254 replaced.

- The trails end at Duck Bay will naturally lead bicyclists to continue on to the Marsh Island Trail (as currently do) which is “Forbidden to bicycles”. How will the current design minimize bicycles and dogs on the portion of Marsh Island trail forbidden to them?
- Please have pavement that isn’t too rough.
- I think good connections with Interlaken and Montlake are very important to make the project more valuable as a larger recreational opportunity.
- 1) The notion that the multi-use trail may be coordinator with the large 24<sup>th</sup> Ave project is very appealing. It opens up the possibility of integrating access from Interlaken Blvd from the businesses and the bus stop across 24<sup>th</sup> at Lynn and McGraw.  
2) How about adding lighting or at least piping for later installation on the project?  
3) Way-finding must be found on 24<sup>th</sup> at Interlaken Blvd, Boyer, E Lynn, and E McGraw.  
4) Bicycle racks – be creative and provide plenty – they must offer options for several bicycles each.  
5) bridge railings – need protection. Can’t have kids impale themselves.  
6) parking: as part of the 24<sup>th</sup> Ave project parking needs to be created from E Lynn to Boston as well as from Calhoun to E McGraw.

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### Written letter -

My biggest fear is lack of activation of the trail and if it’s built as planned without any lighting. Here are my thoughts and ask on low pedestrian-scale lighting:

The entire length of Lake Washington Blvd. recently received a series of classy and energy efficient LED street lights. While the new lights are quite lovely for people driving motor vehicles through the Arboretum, they do nothing for those of us who sometimes choose to tread more lightly on our city by walking or riding a bike to our local destinations.

At this time, the design team for the Arboretum trail has decided to not include equivalent lighting for people walking or biking for fear of vandalism. I want to call into question our unconscious institutionalized bias whereby we consider pedestrians and people biking to be vandals, to be kept out of our parks during morning and evening hours of darkness, where the very same people become “people of pure motives” if they choose to drive gasoline powered motor vehicles or be driven by others.

Now, for a minute, imagine walking home from the Arboretum visitor center after an evening meeting by using the proposed Arboretum Multi-use trail. You will be walking on a trail that has no lighting and is therefore devoid of people jogging, walking their families and dogs, UW students coming home after a day of classes and studying, people out getting exercise and people walking home from the bus stops on 520 or from future light rail station. Without lighting there can be no morning and evening activation of the park space. Without activation, and the passive surveillance that comes free with it, vandals, sex workers and drug dealers will continue to own the Arboretum throughout our long dark winters as they do today. We have a responsibility to ourselves, our neighbors, the Arboretum and our city to do better than that.

The residents of Madison Park, Madison Valley, and Montlake are fiercely protective of their neighborhoods and the Arboretum. With few exceptions, we all have sophisticated smart phones and are willing to immediately call in crimes we see in progress. WE want to protect the Arboretum through activation that can come naturally by simply making it a more open and inviting place through excellent connections from adjacent neighborhoods and good pedestrian-scale path lighting as is commonly done on park paths through civilized world.

Please help me ask the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation to take advantage of this opportunity to create an Arboretum trail that can be made safer for all people by adding pedestrian-scale path lighting either now, or when the remainder of the SR520 funds become available for the north-west portion of the trail.

Thank you.

### **Emailed Comments**

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#### **1. 25 e-mails sent to Andy Sheffer with the following content:**

Dear Mr. Sheffer,

As a Montlake resident, I strongly support the building of the multi-use trail in the Arboretum. It must be combined with improved access on foot and on bicycle across the neighborhood's arterials that in particular need to offer safer access across 24th Ave E. from Interlaken Park, and at E. Lynn and E. McGraw as well as from the Light Rail Station.

I see how this could revitalize our most central park system, and Montlake's small business district which would provide the services needed by park goers with coffee shop, restaurant, convenience store and rentals and repairs at the bike shop.

Safe access across 24th Ave E. and SR520 will make the Arboretum Park and Interlaken Park a compelling outdoor and recreation green area in the heart of our city, and put it in easy reach of many more people.

Given that 24th is slated for improvement as part of a \$45M capital project, we believe that a combined effort by Parks and SDOT could be a tremendous success, and a service to Seattle as a whole, opening the most central park system of the city to even more people, and possibly tourism.

For these reasons, I am truly excited by the building of the multi-use trail.

Thank you,

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#### **2. e-mail sent :**

Hello Mr. Sheffer:

Thank you for providing an opportunity for Seattleites to provide public input on the Arboretum Multi-use trail proposal. I am traveling out of town on Feb. 27 and I'm unable to attend this public meeting, so I thought I would bring my concerns and suggestions to you directly via this email.

The meeting minutes for June 29, 2011 identify, first and foremost, the really obvious reality of bike/pedestrian conflicts. The response to this question (in red on the minutes) is essentially "we don't know .. we're going to punt this issue into the future." I have not read through all of the documentation on the trail, but what I have read does not include any attempts to clearly address this issue. This is not just an imaginary concern; it's a safety issue that can and has literally maimed and killed people.

I have seen this issue successfully dealt with in Toronto where, in high use areas, pedestrians and cyclists get separate paths. I have seen this issue left unaddressed, as in the Capitol Crescent Trail in Bethesda Maryland where cyclists and pedestrians get into altercations and accidents almost every weekend. I was personally involved in such an altercation and broke both my wrists attempting to avoid a pedestrian who literally jumped into my way (I was riding a bicycle at the time). Most people just aren't as rational as you think they can be!

Nevertheless, I think the situation that I've seen work, and that is most like the situation you face in the Arboretum, is handled most adeptly in Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC. I would assume that your development team had looked at other scenarios in use around the world, but given that you're still attempting to put in place a "multi-use trail" while recognizing the inherent conflict and health issues this creates. I shall conclude that it's still true that most people just aren't as rational as I think they can be.

Please allow me to inform you about how things are done (successfully) in Rock Creek Park: On weekdays, the main park road runs one-way into DC (following commuter traffic patterns) and in the eve, they flow one-way out of DC. There is a separate paved trail for pedestrians and cyclists that receives only minor rec./commuting use during the weekdays (similarly to the Arboretum trail although the Arboretum trail receives less use).

On weekends and holidays in Rock Creek Park, the main travel road is closed for vehicular traffic (except for park services of course) and open for all pedestrian and recreational use. During most of the summer weekends, the Rock Creek Park road receives very heavy use by cyclists, roller-bladers, runners and walkers, similar to the Interlaken park here in Seattle. During the weekends, the cyclists mainly stay on the roads, and the walkers mainly stay on the paved trail. Thus, the "mixed use" weekend trail separates slow walking/rec traffic (on the trail) from fast athletic traffic (on the road). There are still accidents on occasion, but from what I saw, most of the time it was caused by pedestrians with dogs both on and off-leash (not permitted but people are ignorant) using the roadway. Much more often, though, because the road available is so broad, there is ample opportunity for all users to avoid one another.

Which brings us to the Arboretum and my opinion on what you should do with the money:

- Leave the trail unpaved, but address drainage issues that leave large puddles on the trail in a couple of locations. This will, by design, discourage cyclist use of the trail, but leave it completely accessible to pedestrian traffic. Furthermore, it will reduce the cost and the environmental impact (i.e. no tar in the woods leaching into the groundwater)
- Close Lake Washington Blvd to vehicular traffic on the weekends From Saturday, 6 am through Sunday 10 pm between the most southerly entrance for parking at the Japanese Garden (leaving the Japanese Garden parking available, but only from the South entrance) and E Foster Island Rd. You will need to block entry at Boyer and E. Interlaken Blvd.
  - This will mean that a few people traveling from Madison Park will have to go up Madison to 23rd in order to get to 520 on the weekends. It will probably add at most 5 minutes to their travel time, but this will also improve the air quality in the Arboretum for all recreational users.
  - You might need to put in a "no right turn" from E. Madison onto 29th - 24th on the weekends to stop people cutting through the residential neighborhood used by pedestrians and the Lake Washington Bicycle Trail that runs through there. There are enough car-issues for cyclists heading through that area without adding even more cars.
- If funds saved from not paving the trail are sufficient, you might wish to consider the following
  - adding a short connector road between E. Interlaken and Lake Washington Blvd, about where E Interlaken changes from N to NW about 350 ft. N of Lake Washington Blvd.
  - End E Interlaken Blvd at the driveway of the most southerly house on E. Interlaken Blvd so that these five houses will no longer have road traffic in front of their houses essentially turning E. Interlaken into a private driveway at that point. This is a private benefit to them so that they complain less about the next item.
  - Add a Lake Washington Blvd. road-side parking lot between the connector road (above) and where E. Interlaken Blvd is today with two entrances from the connector road only - one in and one out. Use trees and shrubs to block visibility between the 5 houses and the parking lot.
  - Remove the parking lot from the East side of Lake Washington Blvd, Just North of E Interlaken Blvd and return it to park land.
  - Add a pedestrian crosswalk between the new parking lot and where the trail meets Lake Washington Blvd. You could add an on-demand flashing amber light at the crosswalk so that pedestrians who wished to cross there, could push a button to start lights flashing for, say, 10-20 seconds.



- Consider copying more of the Rock Creek Park model and the changing Lake Washington Blvd E. to one-way in the mornings and evenings that's appropriate to alleviate congestion and reduce the volume of idling cars in the Arboretum.
- PLEASE consider removing the speed bumps from Lake Washington Blvd E. People slow down to a crawl to use them which means that they have to speed up again afterwards. This is simply horrible for the environment as they increase emissions when vehicles brake and then speed up again. I don't use this road very often, but I do live in the community. I understand putting speed-bumps into high

I hope you find the above suggestions useful, even if they are cribbed off another successful implementation. I also hope your group isn't too committed to paving the existing trail to fully consider the environmental, and social benefits of the above suggestion while also considering disparate costs to both Seattle and trail users (in the form of health care costs).

Thank you,

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### 3. **e-mail sent :**

Hello Andy,

Thanks for the quick chat on the phone yesterday; it was very helpful to hear of your experiences with trail lighting and conduit only investments. Here is my quick brain dump on this subject, most of which we covered yesterday. I appreciate all that you do and enjoy our chances to talk about parks and urban mobility.

The entire length of Lake Washington Blvd recently received a series of classy and energy efficient LED street lights. While the new lights are quite lovely for people driving motor vehicles through the Arboretum, they do nothing for those of us who sometimes choose to tread more lightly on our city by walking or riding a bike to our local destinations.

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exercise and people walking home from the bus stops on 520 or from our future light rail station. Without lighting there can be no morning and evening activation of the park space. Without activation, and the passive surveillance that comes free with it, vandals, sex workers and drug dealers will continue to own the Arboretum throughout our long dark winters as they do today. We have a responsibility to ourselves, our neighbors, the Arboretum and our city to do better than that.

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Please help me ask the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation to take advantage of this opportunity to create an Arboretum trail that can be made safer for all people by adding pedestrian-scale path lighting either now, or when the remainder of the SR520 funds become available for the north-west portion of the trail.

Thanks for adding this to the feedback on the trail presentation for tonight.

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#### 4. **e-mail sent :**

Hi Andy,

Great job on the presentation last night; I'm glad you brought the team thoroughly explained the decisions and designs. I get the impression that everybody felt heard, got their questions answered and walked away happy with the plan.

I found some information about lighting in parks, but I'm sure you already know this stuff. In addition, I included a photo I took last week while biking the Kihei Greenway on Maui with some e-biking buddies that shows how they put lighting on their in-city multi-use trails that are used for residential non-motorized transportation. It looks like the street lighting on Lake Washington Blvd, but for people walking and biking. Pretty sweet stuff.

#### **Lighting**

Good lighting is one of the most effective crime deterrents. When used properly, light discourages criminal activity, enhances natural surveillance opportunities, and reduces fear.

The type and quantity of light required will vary from application to application, but the goal remains the same in all cases. To the degree possible, a constant level of light providing reasonably good visibility should be maintained at night. The absolute level of light, provided it meets minimum standards, is less critical than the evenness of the light. Bright spots and shadows should be avoided. Highly vulnerable areas and those that could conceal a potential attacker should be illuminated more brightly than areas designed for normal activity. The object is to light up the criminal without spotlighting the victim.

As used in CPTED, lighting also plays a part in creating a feeling of territoriality. Lighting can influence an individual's feelings about his environment from an aesthetic as well as a safety standpoint. A bright, cheerful environment is much more pleasing than one that appears dark and lifeless. The ability to feel good about one's environment is important in developing a sense of pride and ownership."

<http://www.crimewise.com/library/cpted.html>